

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TUNIS 1497

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PORG, SOPN, TS
SUBJECT: NON-ALIGNED MEETING ON INFORMATION IN
TUNIS, FEBRUARY 28 TO MARCH 1

REF: STATE 42806, TUNIS 1426

1. SUMMARY: TWO-DAY MEETING OF NAM INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL ON INFORMATION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN CONCERNED WITH LARGELY TECHNICAL QUESTIONS OF HOW TO ESTABLISH "THIRD-WORLD" PRESS POOLS. PRINCIPAL DECISIONS MADE WERE ELECTION OF TUNISIA TO COUNCIL PRESIDENCY FOR THREE YEARS, ADOPTION OF FORMAL RULES FOR COUNCIL FUNCTIONING, SELECTION OF HAVANA AS SITE FOR NEXT COUNCIL MEETING, AND PASSAGE OF RESOLUTION CALLING FOR CLOSE COOPERATION WITH UNESCO IN SETTING UP NAM PRESS POOLS. WHILE TUNIS PRESS DID NOT REPORT ON DESIGNATION OF COUNTRIES THAT WILL OPERATE NAM POOLS, IT APPEARS THAT INDIA, CUBA, YUGOSLAVIA, JORDAN, AND TUNISIA HAVE GOTTEN NOD TO PROCEED WITH EFFORTS TO SET UP REGIONAL POOLS. END SUMMARY.

2. MEETING OF NAM INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL ON INFORMATION, HELD IN TUNIS FROM FEBRUARY 28 TO MARCH 1, WAS LARGELY DEVOTED TO NUMBER OF "HOUSEKEEPING CHORES" IN NAM INFORMATION POLICY. PRINCIPAL TASK WAS ADOPTION OF FORMAL RULES
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FOR COUNCIL ORGANIZATION THAT SET MEMBERSHIP AT FIFTEEN ("AFRICA 6, LATIN AMERICA 3, ASIA 5 AND EUROPE 1). TUNISIA WAS ELECTED TO THE COUNCIL PRESIDENCY FOR A THREE-YEAR TERM WITH GOT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR INFORMATION MUSTAPHA MASMOUDI TO OCCUPY THE POST. SECONDLY, THE COUNCIL ACCEPTED CUBAN OFFER TO HOLD ITS NEXT MEETING IN HAVANA IN 1978 BEFORE NEXT NAM FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING.

3. COUNCIL ALSO DISCUSSED MEANS BY WHICH NAM COUNTRIES COULD FURTHER POLICY OF ESTABLISHING INFORMATION SHARING MECHANISMS THAT SERVED THEIR NEEDS. THEY AGREED TO HOLD MEETING OF NON-ALIGNED JOURNALISTS IN BABHDAD IN MAY 1977 TO DISCUSS EXCHANGES OF MATERIALS AND TO PREPARE REPORT FOR STUDY AT NEXT COUNCIL MEETING IN HAVANA. SIMILAR MEETING FOR RADIO AND TELEVISION OFFICIALS WILL BE HOSTED BY YUGOSLAVIA IN OCTOBER 1977. COUNCIL PASSED RESOLUTIONS FAVORING ACTIVE TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR THIRD WORLD INFORMATION SPECIALISTS AND CALLED FOR CLOSE COOPERATION WITH UNESCO IN THE DEVELOPMENT NAM INFORMATION DISSEMINATION ORGANS.

4. PRESS REPORTS OF COUNCIL MEETING DID NOT MENTION DESIGNATION OF COUNTRIES THAT WILL OPERATE REGIONAL NAM PRESS POOLS, BUT WE UNDERSTAND THAT INDIA, CUBA, YUGOSLAVIA, JORDAN, AND TUNISIA RECEIVED COUNCIL ENDORSEMENT TO CONTINUE EFFORTS THEY ARE MAKING TO SET UP POOLS. ALSO DURING MEETING, AFRICAN DELEGATES MET WITH MASMOUDI TO DISCUSS POOLS FOR THEIR REGION AND DECIDED TO INVENTORY THEIR RESOURCES. THEY WILL STUDY INVENTORY AND DISCUSS SETTING UP A POOL AT A FORTHCOMING MEETING OF AFRICAN PRESS AGENCIES IN TRIPOLI. WE UNDERSTAND THAT GHANA IS PRESSING TO BE DESIGNATED AS THE HOST COUNTRY FOR THE POOL.

5. WHILE WE HAVE NOT YET HAD OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS COUNCIL'S CLOSED DOOR MEETING WITH INFORMED SOURCES, WE UNDERSTAND THAT IT WAS LARGELY UNEVENTFUL. CUBA APPARENTLY PRESSED RADICAL LINE AND PUSHED VIGOROUSLY FOR DESIGNATION AS LATIN CONFIDENTIAL

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AMERICAN PRESS POOL OPERATOR. CUBAN DELEGATE TO MEETING TOLD WESTERN JOURNALIST THAT WHILE PRENSA LATINA DOES NOT NOW COVER ALL LATIN AMERICA IT SOON WOULD.

6. WE WERE ABLE TO OBTAIN SOME COUNCIL DOCUMENTS, MOST NOTABLY THE TEXT OF THE COUNCIL'S FORMAL RULES, A "PROCESS VERBAL" OF THE MEETING, AND A STATEMENT MADE BY YUGOSLAVIA ON NAM INFORMATION POLICY. WE WILL POUCH THESE AND OTHER DOCUMENTS TO NEA/AFN.

7. PENDING DISCUSSIONS WITH GOT OFFICIALS, WE WOULD MAKE PRELIMINARY JUDGMENT THAT TUNISIA IS PLEASED WITH OUTCOME OF COUNCIL MEETING. TUNISIA'S ELECTION TO PRESIDENCY FOR THREE YEARS HAS GIVEN IT BACK THE PREEMINENCE IT HAD LOST TO INDIA IN NAM INFORMATION POLICY. AT LEAST IN PUBLIC REPORTS ON MEETING IN TUNIS PRESS, EMPHASIS WAS ON FORWARD MOVEMENT IN TECHNICAL SPHERE ON INFORMATION SHARING.
MULCAHY

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